

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-05 CIAE-00 COME-00
DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 SS-15
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O 171130Z JUL 78
FM AMCONSUL AMSTERDAM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3547
INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMCONSUL ROTTERDAM

UNCLAS AMSTERDAM 718

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CASC, EAIR, NL
SUBJECT: PAN AM LOW FARE FLIGHTS, AMSTERDAM TO BOSTON

REF: AMSTERDAM 713

1. CONTINUOUS NUMBER REGISTRATION SYSTEM STARTED JULY 12 AND STILL UNDER CONTROL OF PASSENGERS IS WORKING WITHOUT MAJOR HITCH. AS OF LATE AFTERNOON JULY 16, THERE WAS NO BACKLOG AND SYSTEM WAS FOLLOWING THREE STEP PROCEDURE OUTLINED IN REFTEL. THERE IS STILL SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF NO-SHOWS BETWEEN STEPS ONE AND TWO AND EVEN SOME BETWEEN STEPS TWO AND THREE.

2. CONGEN HAS VISITED AIRPORT DAILY TO OBSERVE PROCEDURE AND MEET WITH PASSENGERS. SOME 75 PERCENT OF THOSE DEPARTING NOW ARE AMCITS. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME COMPLAINTS ABOUT DELAYS PARTICULARLY FROM PASSENGERS WHO WERE REGISTERED FOR SPECIFIC FLIGHT DATES UNDER FORMER PAN AM OPERATED REGISTRATION SYSTEM. THESE PERSONS HAVE BEEN ACCOMODATED UNDER NEW SYSTEM WITH LITTLE ADDITIONAL DELAY. PAN AM REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR WESTERN EUROPE HAS BEEN IN AMSTERDAM PAST FEW DAYS AND HAS BEEN ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN PROGRAM. OFFICIALS OF DUTCH AVIATION
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SERVICE (RLD) HAVE ALSO OBSERVED OPERATION, INCLUDING ON JULY 15 AND 16. RLD OFFICIAL TOLD CONGEN ON JULY 16. THAT HE WAS SATISFIED WITH DEVELOPMENTS UNDER NEW SYSTEM.

3. OFFICIALS OF MASSACHUSETTS PORT AUTHORITY ARRIVED JULY 14 TO OBSERVE STANDBY OPERATIONS. THEY WERE DAVID W. DAVIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FRED FORD, AVIATION DIRECTOR, PAUL TOOMEY,

DIRECTOR PUBLIC SERVICES, AND RON BRINN, PRESS OFFICER. VISIT PROMPTEDLY REPORTS IN U.S. MEDIA AND FROM OTHER SOURCES ON PLIGHT OF WAITING PASSENGERS AND ON DISORDERLY CROWDS. MASSPORT OFFICIALS SAID THEY WERE CONCERNED ABOUT EFFECTS OF ADVERSE PUBLICITY ON FUTURE OF LOW FARE FLIGHTS AND ON BOSTON S IMAGE AS GATEWAY TO EUROPE. THEIR INFORMATION ON SITUATION OBVIOUSLY PREDATED JULY 12 IMPROVEMENT WHICH HAS CONTINUED TILL NOW.

4. CONGEN AND EMBASSY OFFICER MET MASSPORT OFFICIALS AT SCHIPHOL AIRPORT. OFFICIALS ALSO MET WITH AIRPORT OFFICIALS AND PAN AM REGIONAL MANAGER. EMBASSY ARRANGED DAVIS MEETING WITH TOP RLD OFFICIAL IN THE HAGUE FOLLOWING WHICH DAVIS MET WITH CHARGE D'AFFAIRES AND TOP EMBASSY OFFICERS. MASS PORT GROUP OBSERVED STANDBY OPERATIONS ON JULY 14 AND 15. DAVIS TOLD CONGEN JULY 15 THAT HE FELT CURRENT PROCEDURE WORKING SMOOTHLY ALTHOUGH HE WISHED IT WERE UNDER PAN AM CONTROL. DAVIS AND FORD LEFT FOR BOSTON ON MORNING JULY 16 AND BRINN DEPARTS JULY 17. TOOMEY TO REMAIN TILL JULY 19 TO OBSERVE SITUATION HE WILL ALSO SERVE AS MASSPORT MESSAGE CENTER TO TRANSMIT MESSAGES FROM WAITING PASSENGERS TO PERSONS IN U.S. HE TOLD CONGEN AT ABOUT 3 P.M. JULY 16 THAT QUITE A FEW PERSONS HAD ASKED HIM TRANSMIT MESSAGES. FYI, DIRECT DIAL OR COLLECT CALLS TO U.S. CAN BE MADE WITHOUT PROBLEM FROM AMSTERDAM.

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5. MASSPORT OFFICIALS ALSO APPARENTLY OF OPINION PAN AM NOT DOING ALL IT COULD TO RELIEVE BACKLOG. WHEN CONGEN PHONED STAPEL SCHIPHOL OPERATIONAL MANAGER ON MORNING JULY 14 TO INFORM HIM OF MASSPORT VISIT, STAPEL SAID HE KNEW NOTHING OF VISIT ALTHOUGH HE HAD SPOKEN WITH FORD ON JULY 13. FORD HAD CALLED TO DISCUSS MASSPORT PLANS TO CHARTER WORLD AIRWAYS AIRCRAFT TO FLY STRANDED PASSENGERS FROM BOSTON TO AMSTERDAM AND RETURN WITH PASSENGERS FROM AMSTERDAM. STAPEL CHECKED WITH RLD AND WAS TOLD SUCH FLIGHT WOULD NOT BE AUTHORIZED AND SO INFORMED FORD. IT IS CLEAR STAPEL FEELS MOVEMENT OF PASSENGERS FROM AMSTERDAM IS PAN AM RESPONSIBILITY. MASSPORT OFFICIALS FEEL THEIR PROPOSED CHARTER, AUTHORIZED BY U.S., SHOULD HAVE BEEN AUTHORIZED BY RLD, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF RECENT MARTINAIR CHARTER TO REPATRIATE DUTCH STRANDEES FROM BOSTON.

6. OUR OVERALL ASSESSEMENT IS THAT NEW SYSTEM IS WORKING WITHOUT CAUSING UNDUE HARDSHIP TO ANYONE. IT IS IN DELICATE BALANCE HOWEVER AND WE CAN ONLY HOPE SYSTEM DOES NOT BREAK DOWN. SO FAR CAPABLE VOLUNTEERS HAVE OPERATED FAIR SYSTEM WE UNDERSTAND JHOWEVER THAT IN BOSTON PASSENGERS OPERATED SYSTEM IN EFFECT EARLY IN PROGRAM ENDED IN CHAOS WHEN

SEPARATE GROUPS ORGANIZED AND DREW UP LISTS FOR FORTHCOMING FLIGHTS .SINCE JULY 12, PASSENGERS HAVE APPEARED AT SCHIPHOL IN MANAGEABLE NUMBERS HAVE ACCEPTED SYSTEM AS IS, AND HAVE BEEN ACCOMODATED WITHIN THREE DAYS. THIS COULD BREAKDOWN IF LARGE NUMBERS ARRIVED AT AIRPORT SIMULTANEOUSLY, ESPECIALLY IF MANY WERE AMONG THOSE WHO WERE ASSIGNED DEFINITE FLIGHT DAYS UNDER OLD SYSTEM. THIS COULD LEAD TO FORMATION OF PRESSURE GROUPS AND CALLS FOR PRIORITY. IF CURRENT SYSTEM WORKS TILL JULY 23 WHICH IS LAST DAY WHEN PAN AM ASSIGNED FLIGHT DAYS, AN IMPORTANT HURDLE WILL HAVE BEEN PASSED.
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